

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-36 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 5, 7, 11, 13, 29 and 33 are amended by the present response without introducing any new matter. Support for amendments to the claims can be found in the claims as originally filed and in Figure 3, for example.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 13-18, 29-31 and 33-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Wilson et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,467,170, herein “Wilson”) in view of Taguchi et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,937,232, herein “Taguchi”); and Claims 3-6, 9-12, 19-28, 32 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Wilson and Taguchi in view of Kimoto et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,390,005, herein “Kimoto”).

Addressing now the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 13-18, 29-31 and 33-35 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Wilson and Taguchi, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites, in part,

displaying an operation status message area on a first part of a touch panel display;

displaying a document counting area configured to show a number of sheets set and a number of documents produced on a second part of the touch panel display;

displaying an input document handling area on a third part of the touch panel display;

allowing selection of at least one kind of input document for image forming from the input document handling area;

displaying an output document handling area on a fourth part of the touch panel display, the fourth part of the touch panel display disposed directly below the second part of the touch panel display; and

allowing selection of at least one of a sort mode, a stack mode, a staple mode, and a punch mode from the output document handling area.

Claims 5, 7, 11, 13, 29 and 33 recite similar features with regard to the output document handling area disposed directly below the document counting area.

Wilson describes a non-touch screen panel which displays copier status and a number of copier output options. The options shown in Figure 3 of Wilson are selected using a number of physical up/down buttons B1-B8. When the user presses the B2 up button, for example, the screen shows the selection box moving from the “YES” option to the “NO” option above. In addition, the boxes above the up/down buttons B1-B8 denote to which setting each respective button corresponds (e.g. B1 corresponds to “ORIGINAL COPY”, B2 corresponds to “COLLATE”, etc.).

Taguchi describes an image forming apparatus with a touch panel 402.

However, the combination of Wilson and Taguchi does not describe or suggest displaying an output document handling area on a fourth part of the touch panel display, the fourth part of the touch panel display disposed directly below the second part of the touch panel display, as is recited in Claim 1.

On page 3 of the outstanding Action the “Copy Exit” and “Staple” buttons of Wilson are asserted as being equivalent to the “fourth part of the touch panel display” recited in the claims. Applicants, however, respectfully traverse this assertion; at least because this portion of the display is not disposed below the “CND” portion of the display which the outstanding Action asserts on page 2 corresponds to the “second part of the touch panel display.”

Taguchi does not cure the above noted deficiencies of Wilson with regard to this feature. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 and similarly Claims 5, 7, 11, 13, 29 and 33 and claims depending therefrom patentably distinguish over Wilson and Taguchi.

Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 5, 11, 19, 24, 29 and 33 patentably distinguish over the cited Wilson, Taguchi and Kimoto references for the additional reason noted below.

Specifically, Claim 5 recites, that

displaying at least one image forming function tab;
allowing selection of a program key to register the at least one image forming function tab;
displaying a programmable registered image forming function tab area on a fifth part of the touch panel display; and
allowing selection of at least one registered image forming function tab,
wherein at least the input document handling area, the operation status message area, the document counting area, the output document handling area, and the programmable registered image forming function tab area are simultaneously maintained on the touch panel display while a selection is made via the touch panel display.

Claims 11, 19, 24, 29 and 33 recite similar features with regard to the simultaneous display.

With regard to this feature the outstanding Action states on page 5 that

While the method of Wilson, Taguchi and Kimoto teaches all areas are displayed on the touch panel for a selection to be made, the displayed areas are not expressly indicated to be simultaneously maintained on the touch panel display while a selection is made via the touch panel display. However, since at least the method of Wilson and Taguchi teaches a plurality of areas being displayed simultaneously when a selection is made via the touch panel display, it would have been obvious to an artisan at the time of the invention to include any number of other areas such as the programmable registered image forming function tab area to also be displayed on the touch panel display at the same time when a selection is made, in order to further facilitate users navigation and selection of functionality choices with a minimum number of screen navigation.

However, Applicants respectfully traverse this assertion and submit that the outstanding Action has not provided any evidence that “it would have been obvious to an artisan at the time of the invention to include any number of other areas such as the

programmable registered image forming function tab area to also be displayed on the touch panel display at the same time when a selection is made.”

As is acknowledged, none of the cited Wilson, Taguchi and Kimoto describes this feature and thus Applicants respectfully submit that it is not possible to merely assert that it would have been obvious without providing the requisite evidence. The assertion that because Wilson and Taguchi teaches a plurality of areas, it would have been obvious to add the recited programmable registered image forming function tab area is improper, at least because of the “plurality of areas” found in Wilson and Taguchi none is equivalent to the recited programmable registered image forming function tab area.

Moreover, the fact that, in the recited invention, each of the recited areas are simultaneously displayed while a selection is made via the touch panel display provides a significant advantage over the cited combination, which, as is noted above, does not provide this feature.

Accordingly, as the combination of the cited Wilson, Taguchi and Kimoto references does not describe or render obvious that the input document handling area, the operation status message area, the document counting area, the output document handling area, and the programmable registered image forming function tab area are simultaneously maintained on the touch panel display while a selection is made via the touch panel display, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 5 and similarly Claims 11, 19, 24, 29 and 33, and claims depending therefrom, patently distinguish over Wilson, Taguchi and Kimoto considered individually or in combination.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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